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14. ABSTRACT <p>Project CHECO was established in 1962 to document and analyze air operations in Southeast Asia. Over the years the meaning of the acronym changed several times to reflect the escalation of operations: Current Historical Evaluation of Counterinsurgency Operations, Contemporary Historical Evaluation of Combat Operations and Contemporary Historical Examination of Current Operations. Project CHECO and other U. S. Air Force Historical study programs provided the Air Force with timely and lasting corporate insights into operational, conceptual and doctrinal lessons from the war in SEA.</p>					
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PROJECT

Contemporary

Historical

Examination of

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REPORT

THE SIEGE OF BEN HET

1 OCTOBER 1969

HQ PACAF

Directorate, Tactical Evaluation

CHECO Division

Prepared by:

MR ERNIE S. MONTAGLIANI

Project CHECO 7th AF, DOAC

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PROJECT CHECO REPORTS

The counterinsurgency and unconventional warfare environment of Southeast Asia has resulted in the employment of USAF airpower to meet a multitude of requirements. The varied applications of airpower have involved the full spectrum of USAF aerospace vehicles, support equipment, and manpower. As a result, there has been an accumulation of operational data and experiences that, as a priority, must be collected, documented, and analyzed as to current and future impact upon USAF policies, concepts, and doctrine.

Fortunately, the value of collecting and documenting our SEA experiences was recognized at an early date. In 1962, Hq USAF directed CINCPACAF to establish an activity that would be primarily responsive to Air Staff requirements and direction, and would provide timely and analytical studies of USAF combat operations in SEA.

Project CHECO, an acronym for Contemporary Historical Examination of Current Operations, was established to meet this Air Staff requirement. Managed by Hq PACAF, with elements at Hq 7AF and 7AF/13AF, Project CHECO provides a scholarly, "on-going" historical examination, documentation, and reporting on USAF policies, concepts, and doctrine in PACOM. This CHECO report is part of the overall documentation and examination which is being accomplished. Along with the other CHECO publications, this is an authentic source for an assessment of the effectiveness of USAF airpower in PACOM.



MILTON B. ADAMS, Major General, USAF
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FOREWORD

This report briefly covers the tactical situation in the Ben Het area during May and June 1969--the enemy threat and the Allied defense. It describes USAF operations in the defense of Ben Het in detail, largely as seen through the eyes of those involved, along with the problems encountered and lessons learned.



INTRODUCTION

Airpower has played a critical role in the defense of isolated Special Forces/Civilian Irregular Defense Group (SF/CIDG) camps in South Vietnam. Previous CHECO Special Reports have addressed the use of tactical air in the defense of such camps at Plei Me in 1965, A Shau in 1966, and Lang Vei and Kham Duc in 1968. The overall tactical air role in camp defense was examined in a Special Report entitled "USAF Support of Special Forces in SEA", published on 10 March 1969.

All of these reports include a central theme--airpower was essentially the only reinforcement available in most cases. It denied the enemy a victory. The situation at Ben Het in June 1969 followed the recurring theme--once again airpower held off the enemy, in this instance until he ended the siege and withdrew.

The Ben Het SF/CIDG Camp, located about eight miles due west of Dak To in Kontum Province, was surrounded by the Viet Cong/North Vietnamese Army (VC/NVA) during May and June 1969. In May, Army of Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) troops had been in the hills around the camp, actively seeking out the enemy and engaging in a number of fire fights. Then, in early June, the ARVN forces drew back into population centers nearby and the VC/NVA closed in on Ben Het. The South Vietnamese did not counterattack and the siege tightened. In previous situations such as this, American troops had rushed to the relief of the beleaguered installations, but at Ben Het they did not, because it lay in an Area of Operation (AO) recently turned over to ARVN. The U.S. commanders did not want to give credence to the view that South Vietnamese could not or would not cope with the VC/NVA. Further, the tactic of using airpower to defend an isolated camp was a standard one that reduced friendly casualties by using ordnance instead of troops

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to destroy a massed enemy.

The latter Allied tactic of using firepower instead of manpower made a spectacular news story: would the lonely and beleaguered outpost hold or fall? Newspaper headlines can inflate an event far beyond its real significance. So it was with Ben Het. Hard-pressed to find stories in an increasingly quiet war, the newsmen had by 25 June discovered the situation west of Dak To. Reports of a sensational nature referred to "the forgotten men of Ben Het", and charges were repeated that those troops inside the camp were needlessly exposed, possibly as "bait" for a trap. There was a widely-publicized complaint to members of the U.S. Congress.

There were hints that the Americans connected with the defense of the camp were disgusted with the South Vietnamese for not coming out and fighting. The VC/NVA inflamed the situation by keeping Ben Het under attacks by fire (ABF) and code-naming the siege "Dien Bien Phu".

By itself, however, the defense of Ben Het had no major impact on the war in Vietnam, but it did offer a prime example of the useful effect of air assets. This effort ranged through the entire spectrum of airpower--from B-52 strikes to airlift--and viewed in the tactical sense, the effort was successful. In a strategic sense, the use of air at Ben Het might have been a precursor of things to come. Such employment of U.S. airpower could spell the difference between victory and defeat in ARVN versus VC/NVA ground battles.

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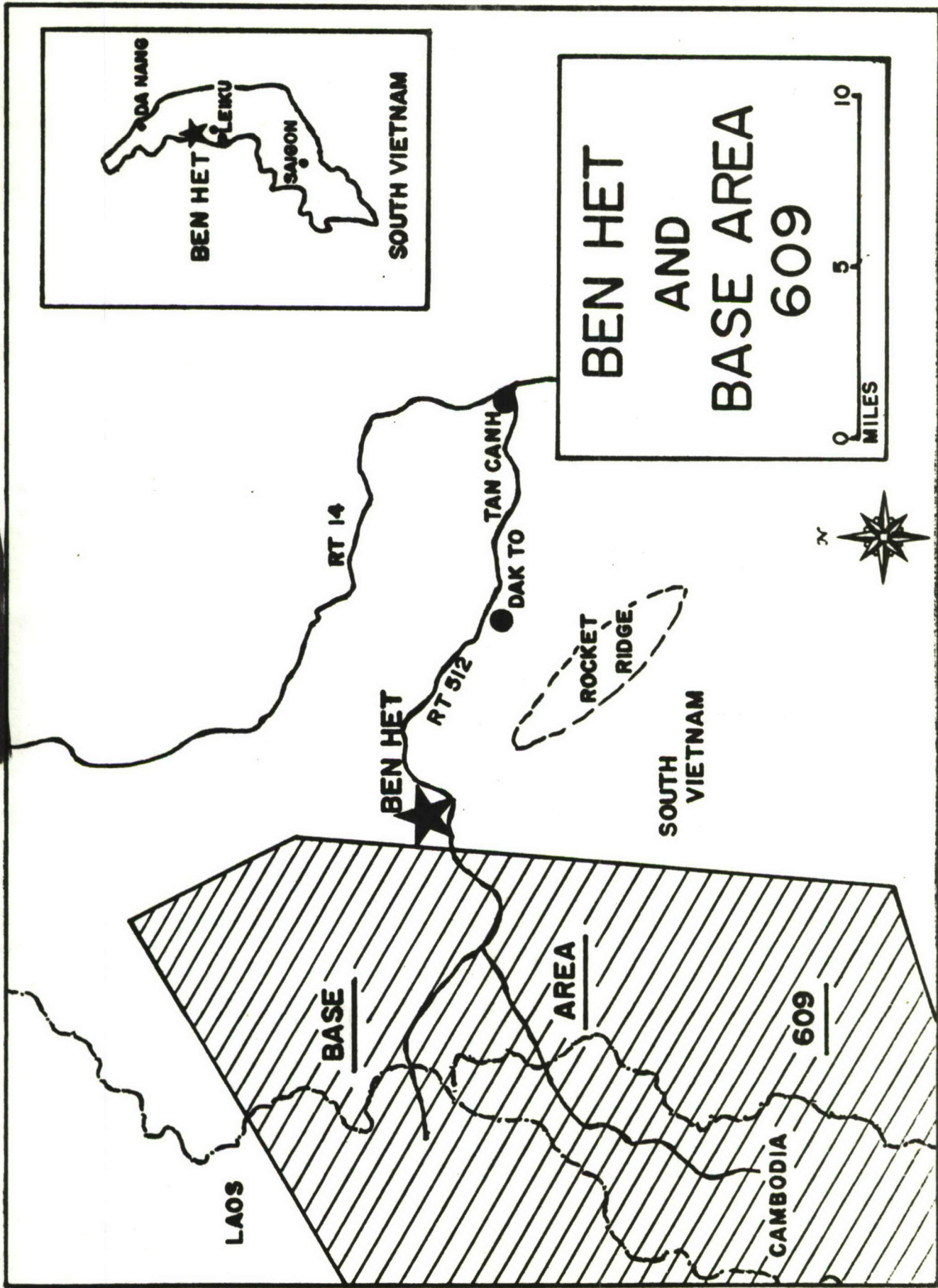


FIGURE 1

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CHAPTER I

THE SETTING

The Ben Het SF/CIDG Camp in western Kontum Province (Fig. 1) was one of the favorite enemy targets in the II Corps Tactical Zone (CTZ) since its construction in 1968. Located on the perimeter of the enemy Base Area 609, the camp sits astride Route 512, a major infiltration route leading in-country from the tri-border area.^{1/}

Prior to May 1969, there had been indications that the VC/NVA were preparing a country-wide offensive. One of these was a general lack of contact with the enemy, and it was judged that VC/NVA were building up men and supplies. There were intelligence reports to confirm the suspicions. One Allied agent stated the enemy had held propaganda lectures in eastern II Corps urging the people to prepare for large-scale fighting. Another report told of a meeting held in a hamlet in Kontum Province, during which the VC/NVA bragged that four of its regiments had moved into the area and would soon liberate it.^{2/}

Although there were no specific dates reported, Allied intelligence predicted that the enemy would initiate some sort of offensive activity in mid-May, perhaps just prior to Ho Chi Minh's birthday on 19 May. The enemy's capability to conduct attacks in western Kontum Province was noted, and some assessments pointed directly to Ben Het/Dak To as the target.^{3/}

Initially, the U.S. 4th Infantry Division had been operating in the highlands around Ben Het. In April, however, as part of a redeployment, the division moved to the south and the responsibility for the area passed to the ARVN 24th Special Tactical Zone (STZ), under the command of Col. Nguyen Ba Lien. Adhering

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to the U.S. policy of continuing to provide support for ARVN ground units, American artillery and engineers, along with U.S. Advisers, remained deployed with ARVN forces in the Ben Het Camp and the surrounding areas.^{4/} (App. II.)

The responsibility for providing most of the air support for the 24th STZ remained with the Free World Military Assistance Forces (FWMAF) system under the direction of the Direct Air Support Center (DASC) Alpha. The Vietnamese Air Force (VNAF) had its own system for air support under II DASC at Pleiku, but its contribution was minimal.

DASC Alpha, collocated with Headquarters, I Field Force Vietnam (FFV) at Nha Trang, was keeping a continuing watch on the traditional infiltration routes through the border areas in western Kontum Province. As early as February 1969, 7AF began a program to interdict these routes to vehicular traffic, making it more difficult for the enemy to move men and supplies into South Vietnam from Cambodia and Laos. The program, named the "Seventh Air Force Special Interdiction Program (SASI)", took in an area along the western border of South Vietnam, from above the tri-border area and extending southward to a point west of Pleiku.^{5/}

The northern portion of the program, called SASI ZULU (Fig. 3), covered most of the routes in the tri-border vicinity; specifically, those which directly menaced Ben Het/Dak To.^{6/} The Commanding General (CG), I FFV, directed that targets in SASI ZULU receive priority during May, as the situation in the 24th STZ was developing.^{7/} The Director of DASC Alpha, Lt. Col. Thomas A. Crawford, stated, "We worked pretty hard on the interdiction effort, for in March they

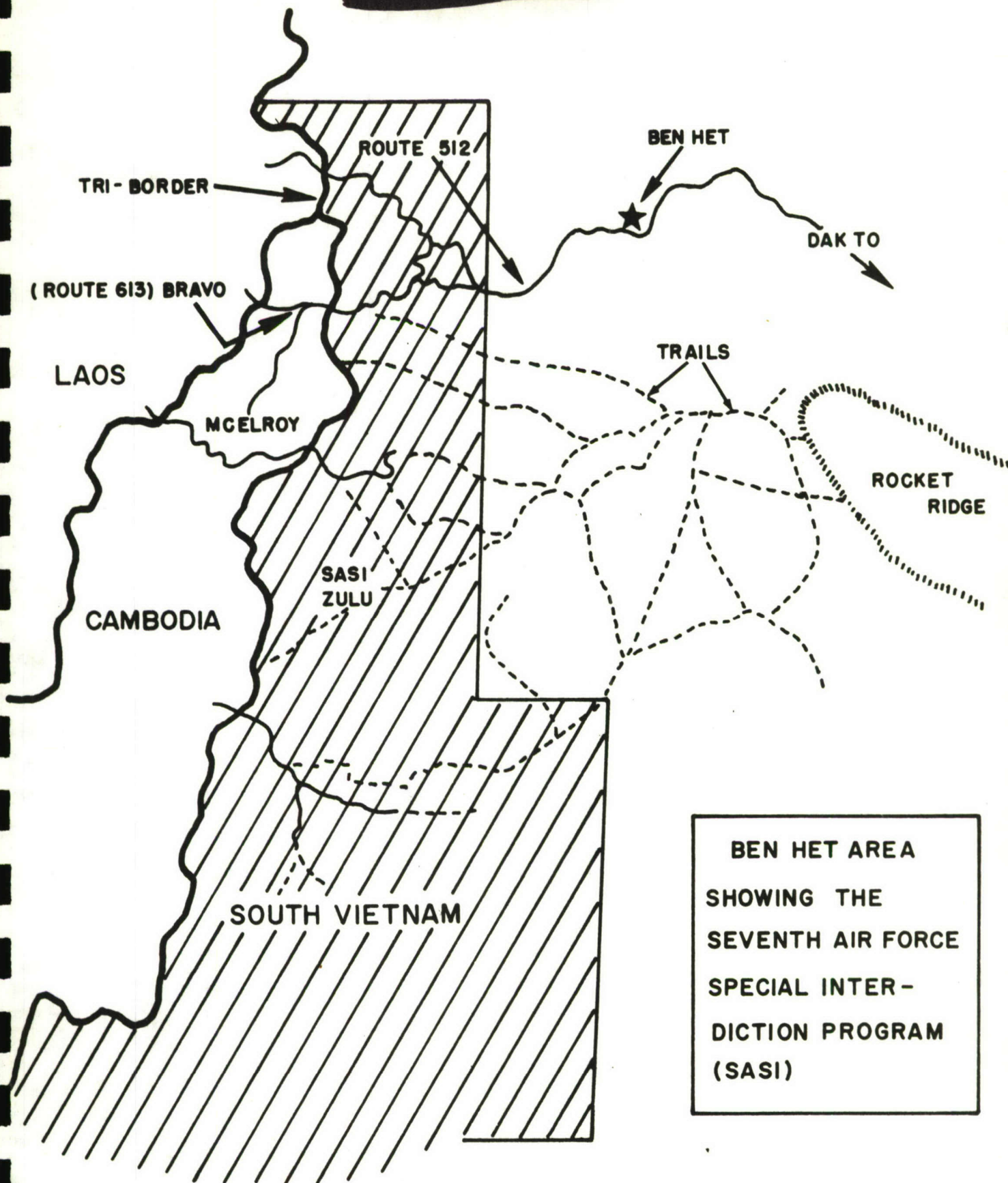
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FIGURE 2

BEN HET; Close-up of main camp.

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**BEN HET AREA
SHOWING THE
SEVENTH AIR FORCE
SPECIAL INTER-
DICTION PROGRAM
(SASI)**

FIGURE 3

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(the VC/NVA) had used tanks against Ben Het...so we paid special attention to these roads...."^{8/}

The CG, I FFV, noted in early June that he was satisfied with the progress of the interdiction effort and reaffirmed that emphasis on the area west of Ben Het should be continued. Accordingly, airstrikes in SASI ZULU remained concentrated around the tri-border area.^{9/}

During June, the enemy had changed his tactics; he gave up trying to use trucks in SASI ZULU. Reconnaissance noted very few attempts to repair craters in the roads, and saw instead evidence of foot and pack animal traffic on the South Vietnamese side of the border. Correspondingly, DASC Alpha ordered a change in tactics:^{10/}

"When we saw that the roads were not being used, we turned to the smaller secondary trails. We began to harass and interdict the trails and footprints, during night hours, using CS [riot control agents] and CBU [antipersonnel] munitions at unpredictable times...."

By the end of June, 90 percent of the roads into the Ben Het area were considered to be interdicted to vehicular traffic. The II FFV, G-3 Air, located at DASC Alpha, explained:^{11/}

"In the northern portion, Route 512, leading past Ben Het, was cut in 24 places between the camp and the Cambodian border...The next road, Bravo, showed five interdictions and was impassable. The third road, McElroy, had three cuts which were impassable...."

The total effect of the interdiction within SASI ZULU during the siege of Ben Het did not allow the enemy to bring in armored vehicles, nor was he able

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to move supplies into the area by truck. The VC/NVA were forced to divert a significant portion of available man power to resupply efforts by porter or pack animals.

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FIGURE 4
BEN HET: Runway Outside Perimeter

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CHAPTER II

THE FIGHTING DURING MAY

1969

During the first week in May, enemy activity greatly increased in the western part of the 24th STZ. VC/NVA patrols were encountered at short distances from Allied installations and attacks-by-fire became daily occurrences against Ben Het, Dak To, and fire support bases (FSBs) throughout the zone.^{1/}

Major enemy units were detected moving into the hills to the south of Highway 512, which ran from the Cambodian border eastward through Ben Het and Dak To. The VC/NVA initially deployed the 28th and 66th Infantry Regiments, supported by the 40th Artillery Regiment, in semicircular fashion to the south of Highway 512 in preparation for the assault (Fig. 5).^{2/}

Apparently, the enemy attack plan called for the shelling of Ben Het/Dak To from Rocket Ridge, followed by the interdiction of the road between the two camps. Thus, having insured that no Allied reinforcements could be brought to Ben Het from the east, along Highway 512, the VC/NVA planned to move in and seize the camp.^{3/}

Ben Het itself was defended by about 440 CIDG personnel, 511 ARVN soldiers, 207 Artillery troops, and 25 U.S. Advisers. To the west and south of Ben Het and Dak To (Fig. 5), ARVN ground forces moved in with widely dispersed screening actions and reconnaissance-in-force operations, hopefully to engage the enemy's units and possibly gain a decisive victory, preempting an assault on the critical areas in the 24th STZ.^{4/}

SECRET

The Headquarters, 24th STZ, along with the zone Tactical Air Control Party (TACP), was located at Kontum prior to the siege. As soon as the enemy's presence in force was recognized, Colonel Lien and his American advisers decided to move a Tactical Operations Center (TOC) to Dak To. In order that close contact could be maintained with the ground forces, an additional TACP was collocated with the TOC. Initially, the TACP, manned by an Air Liaison Officer (ALO) and radio operators,^{5/} was forced to use radios that were mounted in a jeep outside the command bunker at Dak To, but the radios were later moved inside under cover. Under difficult circumstances, the TACP was operational during daylight hours on 9 May, and later was able to achieve a 24-hour capability.^{6/}

In addition to the TACP at Dak To, the Tactical Air Control System (TACS) serving the 24th STZ was augmented by Forward Air Controllers (FACs) and ALOs brought in from quiet areas of II Corps and elsewhere. The FACs were evenly divided between airfields located at Pleiku and Kontum cities to reduce the possibility that they might all be weathered in at one time. Lt. Colonel Thomas, the 24th STZ ALO, was scheduled to leave shortly, because his tour was ending. The Pleiku Sector ALO, Maj. William Yenke, was sent to Dak To, so that an experienced officer would be available to make a smooth transition from Colonel Thomas to his successor, and to insure that no serious problems developed.^{7/}

Major Yenke was stationed at Pleiku and commuted--flying to the TACP at Dak To in the morning and returning home at night--during the time prior to the arrival of the new ALO, and during the time of the first enemy attacks. He had just taken off from Dak To to return to Pleiku when he observed one of the

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THE FIGHTING DURING MAY

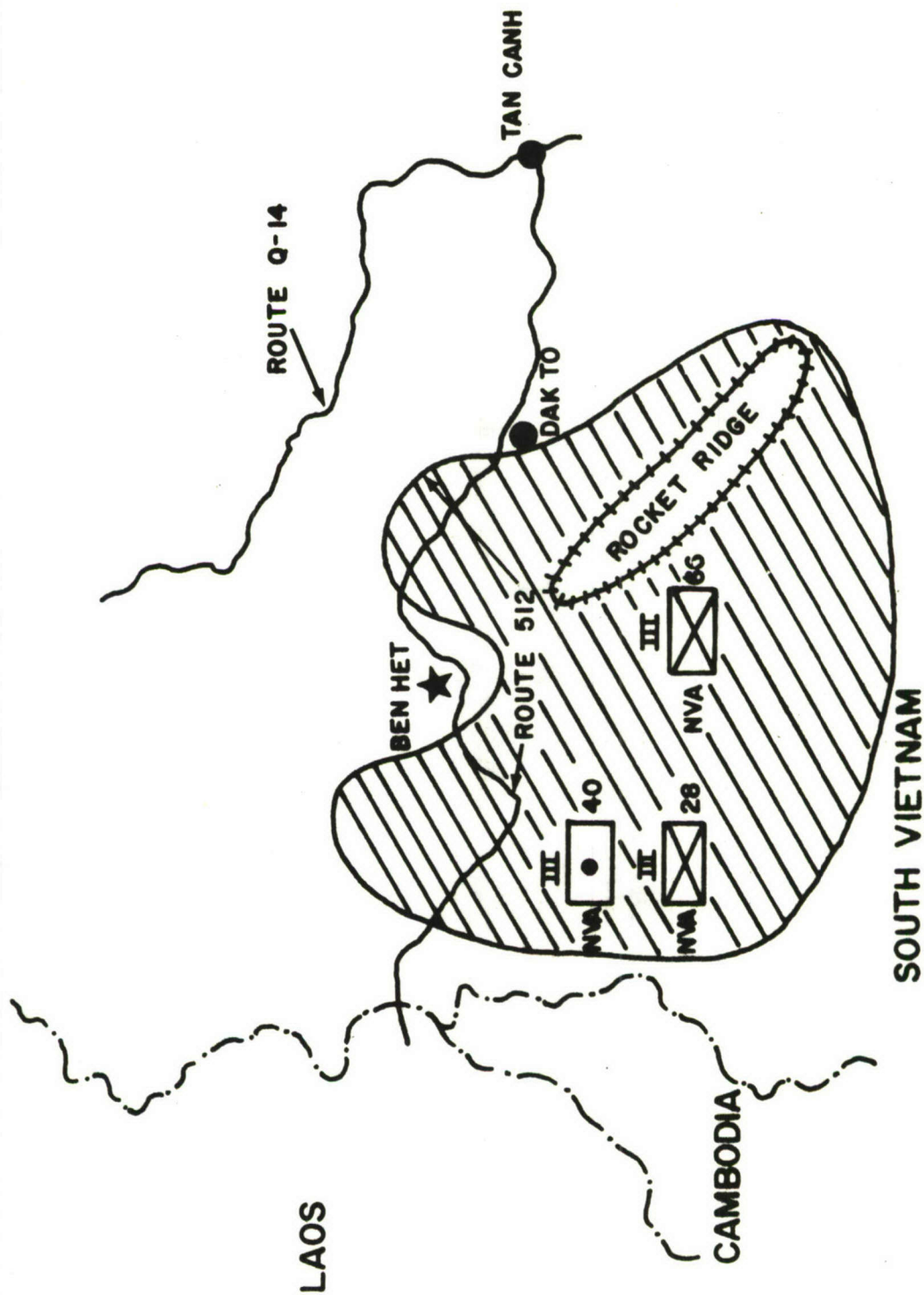


FIGURE 5

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[REDACTED]

initial ABFs: ^{8/}

"I had just left the TOC, just before dark. I took off and decided to fly patrol around the area until dark. I could hear another FAC in the area talking to some Spads (A-1s) on the way up...That's when I saw the rockets take off.

"I shouted into the radio to our TACP in the Jeep to get under cover, and I called the Spads who had just checked in over Dak To."

He noted that the rockets had been launched from the hill about three kilometers to the southeast, and gave the A-1 pilots directions to the targets: ^{9/}

"Well, the lead rolled in and was releasing his ordnance when three more rockets came up directly in front of him. He almost got hit. The Spads noticed three 50 caliber machine guns and small arms firing at the aircraft. So, we put the remaining ordnance, napalm, and antipersonnel bombs, on the targets that we saw. I got some F-4s right behind the Spads and we spread 750 lb bombs all over the area...The enemy fire stopped, and it was getting dark, so I went home...."

Lt. Col. Jack Cude, Jr. arrived on 18 May to replace Colonel Thomas as the 24th STZ ALO. He spent the first few days familiarizing himself with the situation at the TACP at Dak To: ^{10/}

"When I got there, Ben Het and Dak To were getting ABFs, and airstrikes were being flown throughout the area. Some of the first flights I made as a FAC were in support of friendly positions under fire...."

The new ALO noted the weather in May was "excellent" and the targets were lucrative--facts pointed out by most of the people interviewed in connection with the siege. ^{11/} The Director of DASC Alpha, Lt. Col. T. A. Crawford was one: ^{12/}

[REDACTED]

"During the first phase (May) we had troops in the field and consequently, high-priority targets. In other words, we knew where the enemy was...and we found out where the guns were firing from...and the weather was good."

On 15 May, the ARVN strategy changed markedly. Intelligence sources indicated there was a large enemy buildup west of Rocket Ridge, and the South Vietnamese reacted energetically. Instead of the widely dispersed screening operations, which were carried out previously, a mix of eight battalions of government troops took command of the key terrain south of Ben Het and aggressively sought out and engaged the VC/NVA.^{13/}

The ARVN ground forces were supported by tactical air and ARC LIGHT strikes, but the officers at DASC Alpha and ALOs in the 24th STZ believed more airpower could have been brought to bear--the ARVN system was not generating the requests for preplanned sorties that it could have, as Lt. Col. T. A. Crawford related:^{14/}

"...We tried to get the ARVN to request sufficient air to protect the forces that they employed. The ARVN system is not used to getting much air cover, so when they get some, they think its a lot. We were perhaps pushing it a little bit in trying to force more air on them. We worked with the G-3 Air at I FFV who went to the G-3 Air at II Corps, who in turn went to the 24th STZ to get them to ask for more air. When the ARVN was employed in late May, I don't think that we used sufficient air...(we didn't use all of the assets that we could have put in...."

The preplanned requests remained at a low level until the middle of June, but the fact that the South Vietnamese were heavily engaged during the latter part of May brought about a large number of immediate requests, both Troops in



FIGURE 6
Spad Aircraft drops smoke screen
for C-7A Airdrop at Ben Het.

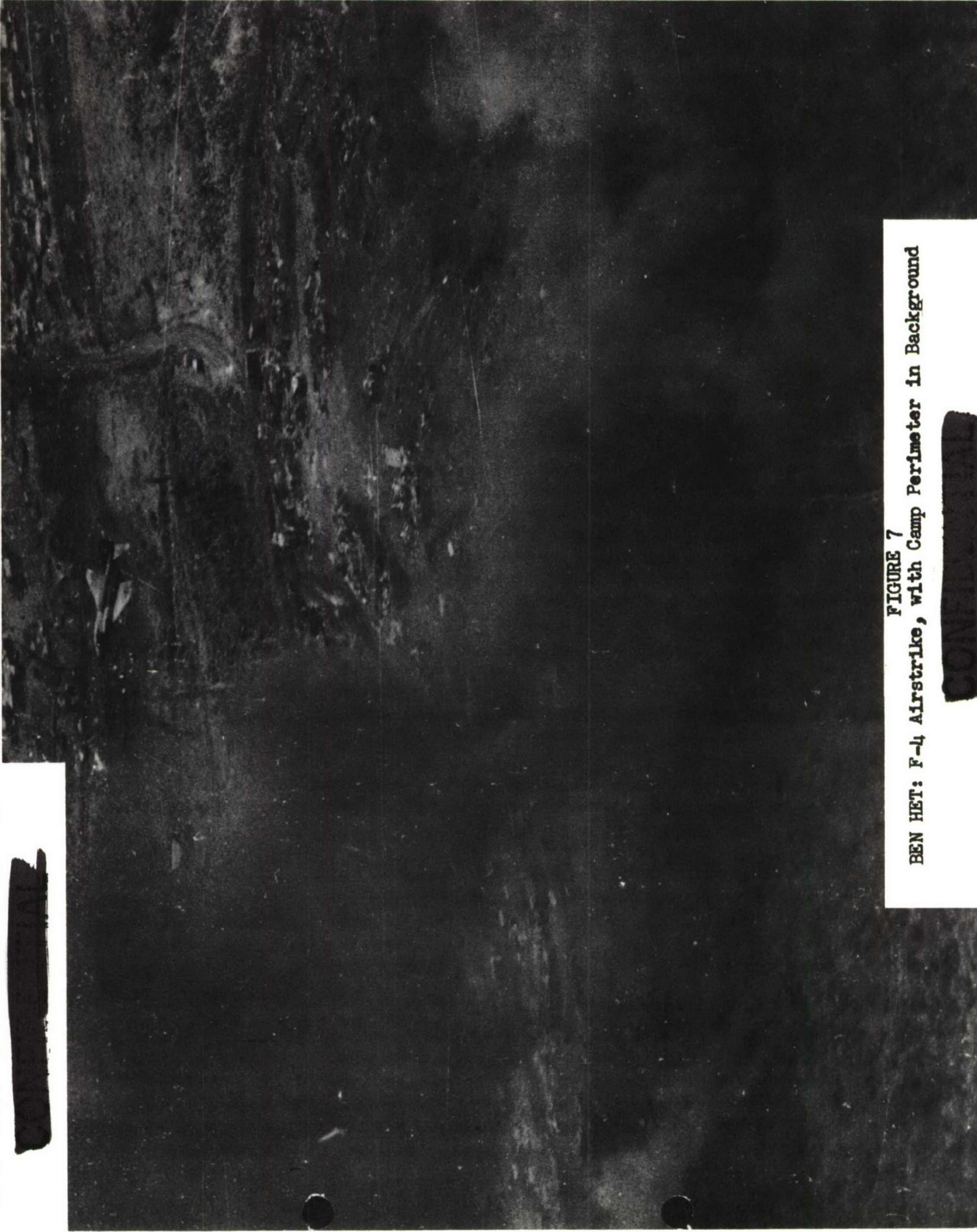


FIGURE 7
BEN HET: F-4 Airstrike, with Camp Perimeter in Background

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Contact (TICs) and Confirmed Enemy Locations (CELs). (See App. I.) There were a few incidents, among the ARVN units in the field, however, in which a lack of coordination was noted. One of these incidents involved Capt. Jerry Whitman, a 24th STZ FAC: ^{15/}

"One day, I got a TIC request. They gave me the coordinates where the VC/NVA were located. But, before I could get an airstrike set up for that one, somebody else from another unit called in a TIC. I checked the coordinates--and found out that each one wanted me to put an airstrike on the other...."

The large number of immediate requests brought this comment from Lt. Col. Jack Cude, Jr.: ^{16/}

"In May we put in 261 airstrikes, which are over 500 sorties. 241 were immediates...this is the way it went...In one instance when I was at Dak To, I got so many TIC requests that I had to decide which ones were most critical. This is like playing God, I suppose, but we handled them as best we could. When you have all of your FACs employed, there is no way to get everybody. And we were sure employed...."

During May, the FACs in the 24th STZ flew 138 missions putting in airstrikes, and flew an additional 169 missions carrying out visual reconnaissance (VR). Sometimes, as many as five FACs were in the air at one time over the relatively small area. ^{17/} The large number of sorties they controlled called for close coordination--and the FACs tried to enhance safety by radioing each other instructions as to orbits, targets, and run-in and break-off headings. The success these FACs achieved was proved, because none were lost to enemy ground fire. ^{18/}

SECRET

During the latter part of May and early June, it appeared the South Vietnamese had won the battle--the VC/NVA forces were seemingly withdrawing westward toward the Cambodian border. The ARVN units began to return to their camps, having fought aggressively the preceding month, and having inflicted severe casualties upon the enemy--the comparative figures were 156 friendly Killed in Action (KIA) against 1,162 enemy dead.^{19/}

Later, when the attention of the press focused upon Ben Het, the reason for the ARVN's return to the garrison became a subject of widespread interest and comment. Newsweek Magazine, on 7 July, considered the situation: "...Constitutes the first significant test of President Nixon's plan to turn the burden of the ground fighting in Vietnam over to the South Vietnamese Army". The article continued by saying that "...the Communists seem to be intent upon making a point that will resound all the way to Paris; that the South Vietnamese Government and its armed forces are too weak to stand alone...."

Time Magazine reported the situation in somewhat the same manner, but its article in the 11 July issue went further: "But, after a month, they [the South Vietnamese] wearied. Unfortunately, the South Vietnamese still seemed incapable of fighting a prolonged and bloody battle with the more determined and seasoned North Vietnamese regulars." The article stated that Colonel Lien, explained his strategy to newsmen in Kontum, "In excellent English, the cocky colonel confided that he had deliberately used Ben Het as 'bait' to lure the North Vietnamese into a position where Allied firepower could destroy them...." Such use of "bait", the article continued, was strictly forbidden by Gen. Creighton Abrams, Jr.

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The tactic, i.e., letting the enemy attack an isolated position, so that vastly superior Allied firepower could destroy his attacking forces, would appear to have a degree of validity. As the 10 March 1969 CHECO Special Report, "USAF Support of Special Forces in SEA", pointed out:

"The basic lesson learned at Thuong Duc was one that had been repeated time and time again throughout the fighting in Vietnam. An exposed camp surrounded by enemy troops provides the best targets for air, particularly if plans are made in advance to employ this air effectively."

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CHAPTER III
USAF VERSUS VC/NVA

During the first part of June, enemy activity in the immediate vicinity of Ben Het increased (Fig. 8). The camp, under continuous ABFs, began to receive small-arms/automatic weapons (SA/AW) fire from enemy troops located a short distance from the perimeter. The camp's defenders detected enemy units close-in with increasing regularity, as it became apparent that the VC/NVA were massing in preparation for an assault.^{1/}

The enemy also moved in to interdict Route 512 between Ben Het and Dak To; convoys attempting to bring supplies to Ben Het were either destroyed, disabled, or driven off. As a result, travel between the two installations was extremely costly; indeed, as the month wore on, it became virtually impossible.

The enemy generally controlled the ground environment in the area, until the ARVN chose to mount offensive operations. This the South Vietnamese were loathe to do, although a few attempts were made to open Route 512. The situation was similar in the hills some distance from the camp. Except for a small number of Mobile Strike Force (MSF) Patrols and those forces manning Fire Support Bases (FSBs), the area did not contain any friendly troops seeking the enemy. The great lack of contact in the 24th STZ was borne out by the low casualty figures for the period 3 June to 8 July--there were only 436 enemy and 156 friendly KIA.^{2/}

Thus, the responsibility for defending Ben Het in June fell squarely upon airpower. Air assets were called upon to protect the perimeter, to keep the

THE ACTION DURING JUNE

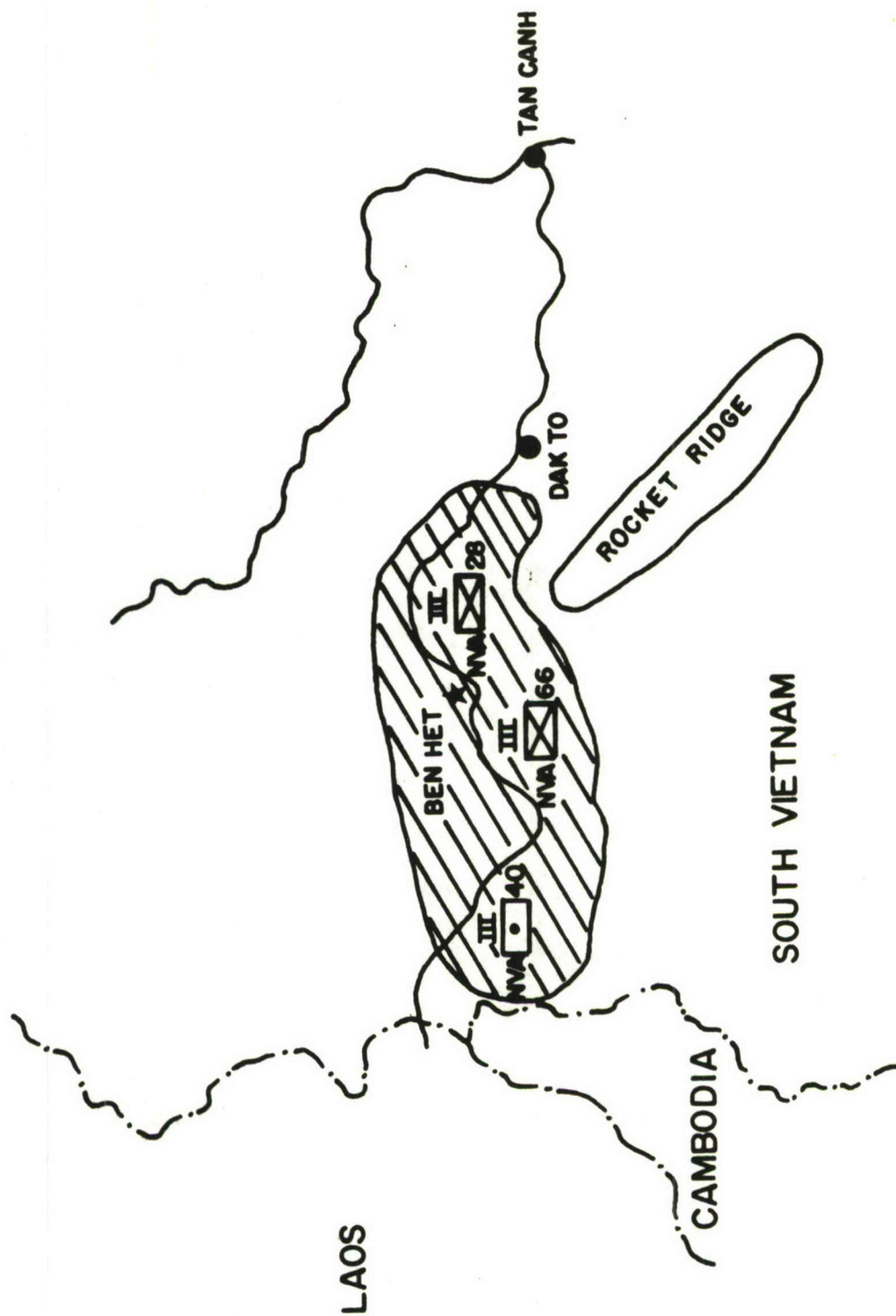


FIGURE 8

[REDACTED]

camp supplied, and to continue the massive air support program throughout 24th STZ. The ensuing examination of the application of airpower at Ben Het in June is focused on these three tasks. Each task is discussed separately, for each one presented its own unique problems and challenges.

Defense of Ben Het Perimeter

Preventing the enemy from physically taking the camp was obviously a prime consideration in the air operations during June. It was apparent that a continuous stream of airstrikes--tactical air, B-52s, COMBAT SKYSPOTS (CSS), and Air Force Gunships--was necessary to smash the enemy units in intermediate assembly areas, hopefully preempting an assault. If an attack were to be successfully launched, it would have to come through a curtain of fire ringed around the camp from the air.

During June, the weather had changed. The monsoon settled over the western highlands, blanketing the 24th STZ with fog in the morning and thunder-showers in the afternoon.^{3/} The FACs could operate in the periods of acceptable weather, but when it became marginal CSS was needed as a backup.

DASC Alpha planned to use the CSS program extensively to complement the FAC-directed strikes around the camp.^{4/} BONGO, an MSQ-77 site located at Pleiku, was the only radar installation near enough to be effective in placing ordnance accurately in the Ben Het area, and there was no alternate site. This fact posed a question: "What would happen if the site were knocked out or failed for some reason?" Col. E. W. Rosencrans, Current Operations Division, Headquarters, 7AF, related the possibility had been considered:^{5/}

[REDACTED]

"We had low-key discussions about this. We could have moved another site from somewhere else in SEA, or we could have shipped one over from CONUS...."

"We discussed other possibilities, using a Marine TPQ-10, for one. U.S. Marine personnel here indicated that TPQ site could be airlifted in four C-130s and could be operational in from 12 to 30 hours after arriving...We also considered the use of the A-6/Beacon system and COMMANDO NAIL (Airborne Radar Bombing)...."

Lt. Col. T. A. Crawford of DASC Alpha also noted that BONGO had no backup: ^{6/}

"This would have been a situation for the A-6/Beacon system. We could have used an additional capability, of some type. To give us not only a backup, but an alternate so we could be working in close to Ben Het and on interdiction at the same time. Luckily, all of II Corps was quiet at this time...We discussed with TACC, informally, the use of a TPQ-10 site...."

The fact that BONGO was also directing the many ARC LIGHT sorties in the area had an effect on its ability to handle CSS, as Colonel Crawford pointed out: ^{7/}

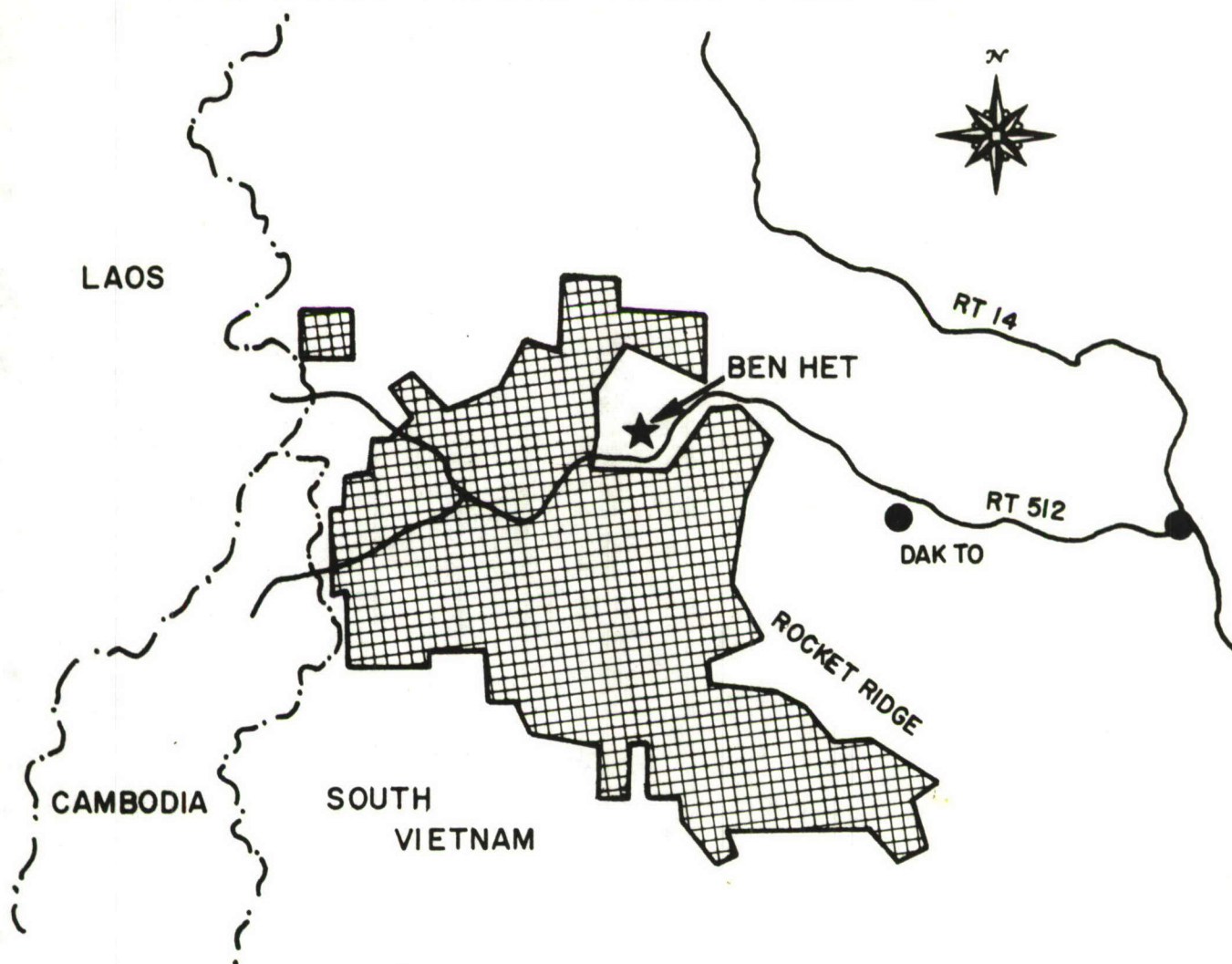
"If we had ARC LIGHT going in, we couldn't put in SKYSPOT at the same time. BONGO is set up so they have a sterile period before ARC LIGHT...."

"The strike would take 20 to 30 minutes to get off, so for each ARC LIGHT that went in, we lost an hour and a half...."

The use of CSS was widespread around Ben Het, especially during bad weather conditions and at night. In early June, targets were hit about 1,100 to 2,000 meters away from the camp, and later the CSS strikes were flown as close as 500 meters. The missions directed as close as 500 meters required special procedures. In these cases, DASC Alpha would call the TACP at Dak To,

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ARC LIGHT STRIKES AROUND BEN HET



ARC LIGHT STATISTICS

<u>DATE</u>	<u>NUMBER OF TARGET BOXES</u>	<u>NUMBER OF SORTIES</u>
MAY		
7	2	12
8-14	12	72
15-21	18	108
22-28	11	58
29-4 JUNE	25	144
JUNE		
5-11	17	89
12-18	10	56
19-25	17	102
26-2 JULY	28	163
TOTAL	140	794

FIGURE 9

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[REDACTED]

who would then call the ground commander in Ben Het. The DASC would explain the limitations of CSS, and then ask him if he would accept the responsibility.^{8/} The ground commander answered in the affirmative in each case.

The CSS missions were flown almost daily in the immediate vicinity of Ben Het. The advisers inside the camp were able to adjust some of the strikes by noting the explosions and relaying corrections to the DASC. Subsequent sorties were put in on the new locations which helped maintain an acceptable degree of accuracy and maximum effectiveness for the CSS.^{9/}

DASC Alpha maintained a Spooky-Shadow (AC-47 and AC-119 gunships) airborne combat air patrol (CAP) over Ben Het during the hours of darkness. At least one gunship was on station (sometimes two), all night--except when ARC LIGHTs and CSS missions were being flown in close. During these periods, the CAP was pulled out of the area until the strike went in, and then was immediately recalled.^{10/}

With few exceptions, ARC LIGHTs struck daily, some in the proximity of Ben Het (Fig. 5). Frequent changes in ARC LIGHT targets occurred, but this had been expected. According to Lt. Col. E. P. Callaway, SAC ADVON, Hq, 7AF:^{11/}

"Our scheduling took place knowing full-well that there would be changes in the target boxes around Ben Het especially, because of the fleeting nature of the targets.

"From 21 to 27 June, we had 98 sorties around Ben Het. Every target box, except one, was changed. Some were changed two, three, and four times...Most were in close support--anything within three kilometers was classified as close support...."

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The combination of FAC-directed strikes, CSS, ARC LIGHTs, and Air Force gunships kept the enemy from launching a serious ground assault on the camp. There was an attempted ground probe on the night of 23 June, to which artillery, Shadow, and helicopter gunships responded, resulting in 14 enemy dead. A Hoi Chanh, who rallied the next day, stated the wire had been cut, but the cut was discovered and forced the postponement of the main assault.^{12/}

During the month of June, the enemy was obviously trying to mount an assault on the camp, but because of the wall of fire that airpower placed close to the perimeter, and because airpower continually struck at valid targets that appeared around the camp, the VC/NVA seemed reluctant to risk its troops. An all-out attack through the hail of ordnance would surely have resulted in the destruction of the attackers, a fact that the enemy leadership undoubtedly realized during the siege of Ben Het.

Resupply of Ben Het

Airlift played a critical role in the defense of Ben Het. One feature of the enemy's plan was to isolate the camp on the ground and deny it logistical support. As was noted, the enemy was successful in early June in interdicting Route 512, and later, he made it impossible to land aircraft at Ben Het's small airstrip.^{13/}

Resupply by C-7 (Caribou) airdrop countered this portion of the enemy's plan. The airdrops had begun on 28 May--bringing in everything from fresh water to ammunition--and continued until the siege was lifted. The drops had to be made into the main camp itself, because any attempted recovery of supplies

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FIGURE 10
BEN HET: Supplies on Target

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outside the perimeter was too costly in terms of friendly casualties.^{14/}

The enemy made a determined effort to halt the Caribou drops, in spite of fighter aircraft orbiting the camp with fire-for-fire clearance. Almost without exception, each airlift mission drew heavy SA/AW fire, causing damage to the aircraft and casualties to the aircrews. From 3 to 21 June, 42 C-7 sorties were flown over Ben Het, with eight aircraft hit by ground fire and three men wounded.^{15/}

In response to this situation, a meeting was held at DASC Alpha on 21 June to devise new methods for the protection of the C-7s. It was decided to initiate offensive fire-suppression action and to compress all of the drops into a short period of time. All suppressive strikes were to be scheduled around the Caribou times-over-target (TOTs).^{16/}

The system operated as follows: 7AF would frag four jet fighters (F-4s or F-100s) with napalm and two A-1s (Spads) with smoke and CBU munitions to arrive at Ben Het prior to the C-7 TOT. About 20 minutes before the scheduled drop, the jets would strike north and east of the camp's perimeter, while artillery pounded the area to the south. At TOT minus three minutes, the jet fighters were to be off target. Next, the Spads were to drop the smoke and CBUs on both sides of the Caribou run-in heading, forming a corridor, and were to fire their 20-mm and 7.62-mm guns on return passes.^{17/}

Then the Caribous would begin their run-in, escorted by A-1s off the wing tips and a FAC in trail. If any ground fire were noted, the FAC was to mark and the Spads were to fire on the target without delay.^{18/}

[REDACTED]

The system was inaugurated on 22 June, and was immediately successful. Lt. Col. Jack Cude, Jr. described one of his experiences while FACing for Caribous and Spads: ^{19/}

"...I was in trail position and I noticed small arms fire coming up at us from a location a short distance away. I dropped a wing and marked--and told the Spad to hit the smoke. He did and the fire from there stopped. I guess the whole thing had taken 15 seconds...."

"...After a while, Charlie got the idea that we were serious and he quit firing at the formations. The system was successful...."

The success was also demonstrated in statistics relating the airdrops from 21 June to 3 July. During this period, 57 Caribou sorties were flown, with no aircraft hit and no crewmen wounded. There were 70 tac air sorties used to furnish the fire suppression in support of these C-7s. ^{20/}

Concurrent with the airlift resupply activity, the FACs and tac air were supporting Allied efforts to open Route 512 between Ben Het and Dak To. The ARVN attempted to run a few heavily-guarded convoys through in June, but each one was invariably ambushed. The road-repair parties met the same fate--and air-power was called upon to furnish cover.

As soon as Colonel Cude was informed that a convoy would be sent along Route 512, he assigned a FAC to cover it, along with two A-1s overhead to be used if the need arose. He explained how this "airborne road guard" operated: ^{21/}

"The FAC was in contact with the armored-cavalry on the ground at all times. In the event that something happened to the engineers out in front of the convoy, the FAC could switch the radio and

talk to them, too....

"...If the enemy fired on the convoy, we'd mark, and a Spad would drop a bomb or two, and so on down the road...."

The enemy dug obstacles in the way of convoys and then fired on the attempts to fill them. Colonel Cude related an incident near one of the road cuts: ^{22/}

"Charlie had dug ditches across the road and I saw at least one of them. The convoy, made up of Armored Personnel Carriers (APCs), tanks, and Engineers, approached the cut."

"Out in front were the Engineers with dump-trucks, dirt, and other material to repair the cut. These front people were hit. They were completely exposed and weren't well armed. As I was putting in an air-strike, I noticed some of the Engineer troops lying along the road, some with M-16s, but most had shovels and the like...."

Captain Whitman, a 24th STZ FAC, related a similar incident in which he had heard there had been an ambush, and that the Engineers were in trouble: ^{23/}

"I came over to see if I could help out with an air-strike. I had three sets of fighters coming up. After I put in the first set, the Engineers got so they weren't pinned down, and after the last set, they loaded up and pulled out, while we ran strafes down on both sides of the road."

"When they were retreating to Dak To, their controller called them on the FM radio and asked them how many dead and wounded they had. The man in charge of the convoy replied that he didn't know, but they had dead and wounded in each truck. His last comment was 'To hell with it, I don't want to talk about it anymore!...' and he shut the radio off. Later, he regained his composure and told the people at Dak To to get all of the Medics out to meet his people...and this was at a time

[REDACTED]

when the newspapers were reporting that the road was open...."

The enemy interdiction of Route 512 from Ben Het to Dak To was the most successful part of the attack plan. Although two or three heavily armed convoys succeeded in pushing through to Ben Het, the road was essentially closed to Allied traffic. It remained closed until 29 June, when the enemy lifted the siege and withdrew.

Continuing Air Support for 24th STZ

The Ben Het perimeter was defended by a wall of fire laid down by airpower and the camp was resupplied by airpower. Beyond this, airpower carried the fighting to the enemy--blasting his LOCs, strong points, and troop concentrations in the areas that had been vacated by ARVN.

Since there were few friendly ground troops operating in the hills near Ben Het, and because of bad weather, it became difficult to find targets. During May, there had been large numbers of high priority targets, TICs and CELs, but in June the targets were degraded. Colonel Crawford explained: ^{24/}

"During the last month, we started getting SELs (suspected enemy location) and AELs (acquired enemy location) because our intelligence wasn't good. So, with the concurrence of the CG, I FFV, we arbitrarily said that we would put the air at Ben Het and the 24th STZ. This raised the target categories up there, in a sense. But, we knew that the targets in the latter part of the operation were not as valid as they should have been...."

Major Yenke also referred to the targeting in a discussion that he had with an Army Adviser during the middle part of June: ^{25/}

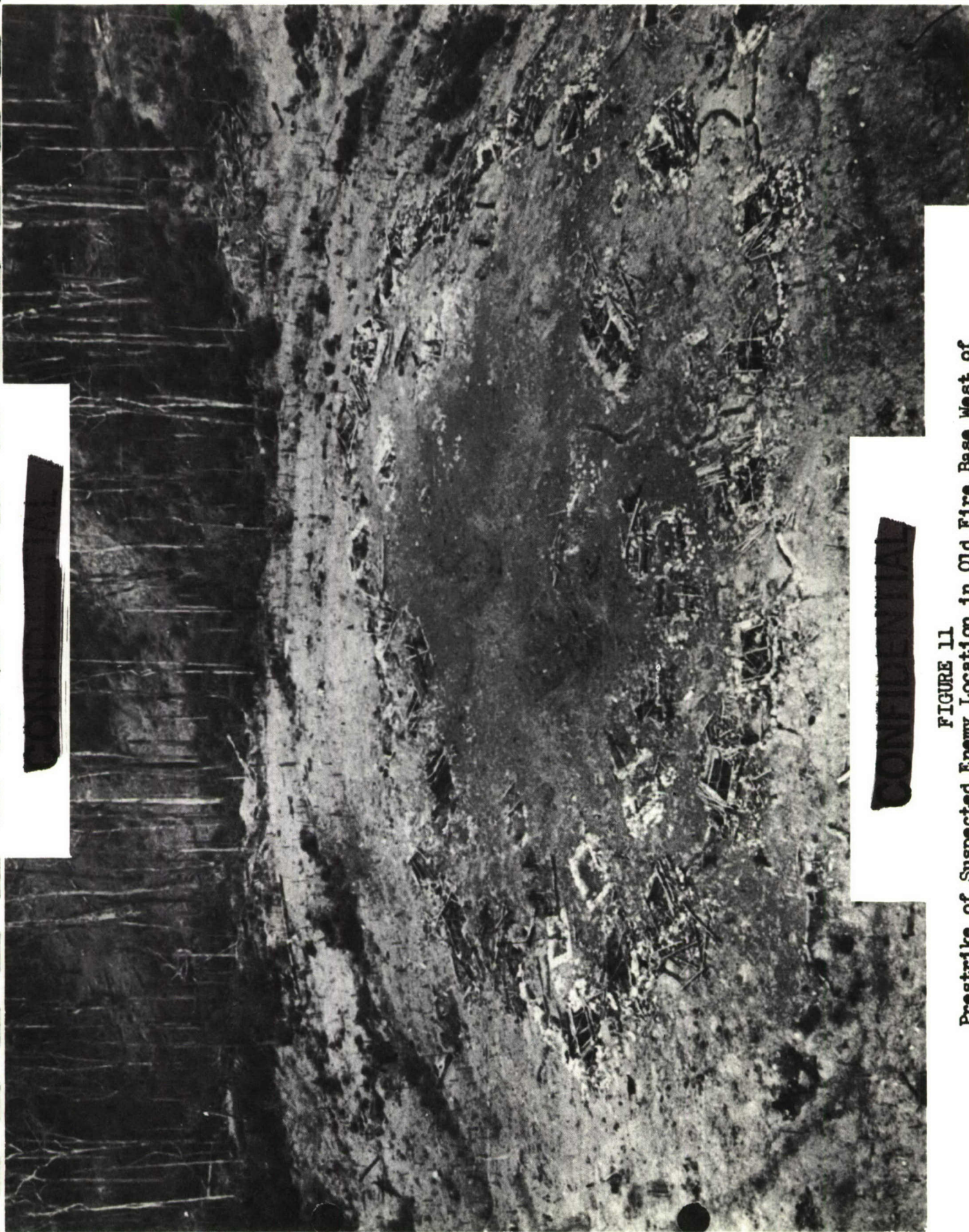


FIGURE 11
Prestrike of Suspected Enemy Location in Old Fire Base West of
Ben Het Main Camp. Area cratered previously by Combat Skyspot.

[REDACTED]

"I told him that there were no friendly troops out in the field, and that good air support depended on good targets. The whole problem, underscore problem, was that we weren't getting any good targets...."

Maj. Yenke's conversation with the adviser pointed out that at least some of the people in the advisory system were beginning to believe they were not getting adequate air support. This belief was based almost exclusively on a criterion by Army personnel which equated air support with the total number of sorties, rather than sorties sufficient for the targets developed. Colonel Crawford mentioned this attitude: ^{26/}

"I had been asked many times why we couldn't allocate more air for the 24th STZ, so I explained that MACV TASE did the allocating, based on requests from the 24th STZ, and not 7AF. The preplanned sorties were given on the basis of requests through the Army system. Any immediate sorties were handled by the Air Force, and the 24th STZ got all it asked for. Colonel Hansen and Colonel Rosencrans called many times to insure that the Ben Het area was getting all the air needed."

The reason for the belief was explained by Lt. Col. Jack Cude, Jr.: ^{27/}

"There was a sore-point brought up by higher command, someone had brought up the fact that there had been a 60-sortie day sometime before--I think in February... This was used to goad the senior adviser. But, that was at a time when there was hardly a cloud in the sky and no thunderstorms...."

Maj. William Yenke added: ^{28/}

"...Colonel Weyand, an American adviser, was beginning to say that he wasn't getting adequate air support, based on what somebody had told him. It

seems that last February there were a couple of enemy field guns firing, and 40 to 60 strikes were put in to silence them. Whoever told Colonel Weyand about it said 'You know, you're not benefiting from the lessons we learned up here'...and so, based on information like that, the advisers were saying that they were not getting adequate air support...."

The ARVN system began to request more preplanned sorties in mid-June. Later in the month, the CG, I FFV, expressed concern over what he considered to be an insufficient number of sorties being flown in the 24 STZ, although he did not mention a lack of strikes on valid targets. Again, the CG's view appeared to have been in relation to the number of sorties in the area, and he noted a large number of low-priority targets being struck in other places in II Corps.

In response, discussions were held between the Assistant G-3 Air Adviser of II Corps; the G-3 Air, I FFV; the duty officer at the TASE; and the Director of DASC Alpha. A recommendation was made on 22 June that the 24th STZ should request more immediate sorties. The G-3 Air, I FFV, with the concurrence of the DASC Director, responded in a memo on 26 June. It said in part: ^{29/}

"Regarding the force-feeding of missions to the Ben Het area...the following policies, conditions, and events should be noted:

"Ben Het has first priority on all air in II CTZ.

"On 24 June, DASC Alpha was notified that 7AF would frag 10 additional sorties daily for use in the Ben Het area.

"It is the policy of the Director, DASC Alpha, and myself that when the weather opens in the Ben Het area, all available air to I FFV

[REDACTED]

is considered available for Ben Het.

"In addition under conditions of good weather in the Ben Het area, II Corps G-3 Air is immediately informed by this headquarters to generate immediate air requests to supplement the preplanned air."

The memo concluded with the following observations: ^{30/}

"Excessive (low priority) targets struck in the II CTZ in areas other than Ben Het are the result of weather conditions in the Ben Het area causing airstrikes to be diverted to other areas and lower-priority targets."


"G-3 Air and the Director, DASC Alpha, are constantly evaluating the tac air situation in the Ben Het area in order to place as much air as possible at the disposal of the ground commanders...."

During the same period, i.e., the last week in June, Headquarters, 7AF, again made it amply clear that Ben Het was to receive highest priority for air support. This was evidenced partly by the daily 10-sortie increase noted in the listed memo. The 7AF concern was further evidenced by communications between TACC and DASC Alpha, which included hourly updates of information from the DASC and offers of more air from TACC. There was much command influence, ^{31/} as Col. E. W. Rosencrans at the TACC noted.

On 28 June, special instructions were issued at the TACC relative to the situation at Ben Het. The Senior Duty Officer's Official Activities Log contained the following entry: ^{32/}

SDO - Lay It On Ben Het!

- . Keep a Shadow or Spooky over Ben Het all night tonight. Take from other areas if necessary.

- 
- . I want two fighters every thirty minutes over Ben Het beginning as soon as possible on the morning of 29 June. Check with DASC Alpha to see how soon they can get a FAC there. All fighters are to expend!
 - . Lay on the COMBAT SKYSPOT tonight--as many as possible.
 - . I would rather be guilty of overkill than be blamed for another Dien Bien Phu!
 - . Ben Het sorties will be fragged (preplanned) beginning on Monday.
 - . Any questions--please call.
- s/Colonel Rosencrans

Not the lack of sorties, but the combination of bad weather and insufficient friendly troops in the field was lessening the overall effect of air support. The FACs did what they could--in June they flew 99 missions, putting in airstrikes and 157 sorties conducting VR--but they obviously could not bring about TICs and large numbers of CELs. Consequently, the amount of air assets available in late June exceeded the lucrative targets.

^{33/}
Lt. Col. Jack Cude, Jr. said:

"...toward the last, we had too much air...we felt that we could have done a better job with one-half the sorties, if we could have gotten good, confirmed targets and reasonable weather..."

^{34/}
Maj. William Yenke affirmed:

"The problem was two things, bad weather and bad targets. The only reason that the performance level deteriorated was that the troops were pulled in and the monsoon came...."

^{35/}
Capt. Donald Marx supported the general feeling:

"We didn't have valid targets because nobody was

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out looking for the enemy on the ground...The weather was bad...The FACs put in airstrikes based on intelligence that was at least a week, and sometimes a month old. We had an excess of air assets that we could have done without, and still had as good results. We did not need more airstrikes."

During the last week in June, both ABFs and sightings of enemy troops decreased around Ben Het and throughout the 24th STZ. Intelligence sources indicated that the VC/NVA were pulling back toward the west into Cambodia.^{36/} Col. Cude, however, was not totally convinced the enemy had given up the siege. He related that his uncertainty was based partly on what had happened during the latter part of May and early June.^{37/}

The U.S. Army advisers were also uncertain about the enemy's movements and intentions. It was not until 2 July that they were fairly certain the VC/NVA had gone, and the siege was declared officially over.^{38/} Then the advisers wanted an end to the air support for Ben Het.

Captain Marx was the Senior Fighter Duty Officer on duty at DASC Alpha on 2 July when the G-3 Air Adviser, II Corps, called and asked that all further tactical air sorties for the 24th STZ be stopped. At 2000 hours, Captain Marx relayed the request to Colonel Rosencrans at TACC. Later, at 2020 hours, Brig. General Timothy, the Deputy Senior Adviser for II Corps, phoned the TACC and verified that air support was no longer needed. Then the necessary orders were relayed and the continuing program in support of Ben Het was canceled.^{39/}

The air effort in the 24th STZ during June was considered by most commentators to be sufficient, although the targets were not as valid as they could

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(or should) have been. However, there seemed to be a misunderstanding about the effort on the part of some ground officers in the advisory system in 11 Corps. As these quotations indicate, they were thinking in terms of numbers of sorties flown, rather than in terms of valid targets struck.

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CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY

The enemy siege of Ben Het was another example in a long series of episodes in which airpower defended an isolated, beleaguered Special Forces/CIDG camp. In some of the cases, such as A Chau and Kham Duc, the camps were lost or evacuated. But in others, such as Khe Sanh, Dak To, Duc Lap, Thuong Duc, and Ben Het, the camps owed their survival largely to the heavy employment of airstrikes around the perimeters and approaches to the installations. The airpower needed in the defensive role was always available; when faced with an enemy assault, the outposts could rely on the use of air assets to save them from an enemy assault.

The use of airpower at Ben Het was seen as being divided into two timeframes, each with its own peculiarities. During the first phase encompassing May, friendly troops were in the field; this resulted in fighting and good valid targets. There were also good weather conditions. In June, however, the friendly ground forces came back into garrisons--and the weather turned bad. Consequently, air in the second phase could not be applied on the good targets that had existed in May.

There were calls from various ground advisers for more airstrikes--while from the top, sorties were being force-fed into Ben Het.

People from the DASC level on down to the FACs in the 24th STZ believed more airpower was employed than was absolutely necessary. But, a central point was once again made--that no camp need fall, if sufficient air support

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could be guaranteed for its defense. Ben Het received the guarantee.

Brig. Gen. J. S. Timothy, in a message to Gen. George S. Brown, 7AF Commander, dated 12 October 1969, revealed the effect of airstrikes upon a major enemy unit that had taken part in the action around Ben Het:^{1/}

"Prisoner Duong Than Ban...stated that he was in the B-3 Front Headquarters area in Cambodia (Base Area 609) when the 28th NVN Regiment returned from the May-June 1969 battle near the Ben Het SF Camp. He said that the regiment had been hit by a series of B-52 strikes in the immediate vicinity of the Ben Het camp, then had been hit by another series of B-52 strikes as they pulled back to their base area in Cambodia. These strikes caused major damage to the regiment. There were only two companies (200 men) left of more than 1,000 men that had entered the battle area...."

Noting the close cooperation among U.S. and ARVN personnel, General Timothy called the operation around Ben Het "...a resounding Allied victory...." He concluded by congratulating General Brown: "On behalf of CG, II CTZ, and all Allied participants in this major campaign of the Vietnam War, I wish to convey to you and to your fine command a deep appreciation for this magnificent accomplishment."

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FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER I

1. (S) Briefing, Lt Col. C. J. Cunningham, Chief, Intel Spt Div, DCSI, Hq 7AF, undated. (Hereafter cited: Briefing, Lt. Colonel Cunningham.)
2. (C) Rprt, DASC Alpha, subj: "Situation Report for Ben Het-Dak To Offensive", 28 Jun 69. (Hereafter cited: Situation Report, DASC Alpha, 28 Jun 69.)
3. (C) PERINTREP, Hq, I FFV, 4 to 10 May 69.
4. (S) Interview, Lt T. A. Devilbliss, Assistant Highland Desk Officer, G-2, Hq, I FFV, 8 July 69. (Hereafter cited: Interview, Lt Devilbliss.)
5. (S) Interview, Lt Col. J. J. Trankovich, G-3 Air, Hq, I FFV, 11 July 69. (Hereafter cited: Interview, Lt Colonel Trankovich.)
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. (S) Interview, Lt Col T. A. Crawford, Director, DASC Alpha, 10 Jul 69. (Hereafter cited: Interview, Lt Colonel Crawford.)
9. (S) Interview, Lt Colonel Trankovich.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.

CHAPTER II

1. (S) Briefing, Lt Colonel Cunningham.
2. (S) Interview, Lt Devilbliss.
3. Ibid;
(C) Working Paper, subj: "Ben Het", DISC, Hq 7AF, undated.
4. (S) Briefing, Lt Colonel Cunningham.
5. (C) Situation Report, DASC Alpha, 28 Jun 69.

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6. (S) Interview, Maj William Yenke, Pleiku Sector ALO, II Corps, 13 July 69. (Hereafter cited: Interview, Major Yenke.)
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
(C) Interview, Lt Col Jack Cude, Jr., ALO, 24th STZ, 13 Jul 69. (Hereafter cited: Interview, Lt Colonel Cude.)
11. Ibid.
12. (S) Interview, Lt Colonel Crawford.
13. (S) Briefing, Lt Colonel Cunningham.
14. (S) Interview, Lt Colonel Crawford.
15. (C) Interview, Capt Jerry Whitman, FAC, 24th STZ, 13 Jul 69.
16. (C) Interview, Lt Colonel Cude.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid.
19. (S) Briefing, Lt Colonel Cunningham.

CHAPTER III

1. (S) Briefing, Lt Colonel Cunningham.
2. Ibid.
3. (S) Interview, Lt Colonel Crawford;
(C) Interview, Lt Colonel Cude.
4. Ibid.;
(S) Interview, Capt Donald Marx, Air Operations Duty Officer, DASC Alpha, 11 Jul 69. (Hereafter cited: Interview Captain Marx.)
5. (S) Interview, Col E. W. Rosencrans, Chief, Current Operations Division, TACO, Hq 7AF, 30 Jun 69. (Hereafter cited: Interview, Colonel Rosencrans.)
6. (S) Interview, Lt Colonel Crawford.

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7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. (S) Interview, Captain Marx.
10. Ibid;
(S) Interview, Colonel Rosencrans.
11. (C) Interview, Lt Colonel E. P. Callaway, SAC ADVON, Hq 7AF, 24 Jul 69.
12. (C) Rprt, Hq 7AF, "Vietnam Intelligence Summary" (VIS), 20-26 Jun 69.
13. (C) Rprt, DASC Alpha, subj: "Final Update of the Ben Het Offensive", 13 Jul 69. (Hereafter cited: Rprt, DASC Alpha.)
14. (C) Interview, Lt Colonel Cude.
15. (C) Rprt, DASC Alpha.
16. Ibid.
17. (C) Memo for Record, ARVN Tac Air, Hq, I FFV, subj: "Suppressive Fire for Caribou Aircraft on Ben Het Resupply Missions", 21 Jun 69.
18. (C) Interview, Lt Colonel Cude.
19. Ibid.
20. (S) Briefing, Lt Colonel Cunningham.
21. (C) Interview, Lt Colonel Cude.
22. Ibid.
23. (C) Interview, Captain Whitman.
24. (S) Interview, Lt Colonel Crawford.
25. (S) Interview, Major Yenke.
26. Ibid.
27. (C) Interview, Lt Colonel Cude.
28. (S) Interview, Major Yenke.
29. (S) Interview, Colonel Rosencrans.
30. Ibid.

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31. (S) Memo, Hq, I FFV, Artillery, subj: "Tac Air Spt for the 24th STZ",
22 Jun 69;
(S) Memo, Hq, I FFV, G-3 Air, subj: "Tac Air Spt for Ben Het",
26 Jun 69.
32. Ibid.
33. Interview, Lt Colonel Cude.
34. Interview, Major Yenke.
35. Interview, Captain Marx.
36. Interview, Lt Colonel Cude.
37. Ibid.
38. Rprt, DASC Alpha, 13 Jul 69.
39. Interview, Colonel Rosencrans.

CHAPTER IV

1. (C) Msg, Brig. Gen. J. S. Timothy to Gen. G. S. Brown, 12 Oct 69.

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APPENDIX I

TARGET CATEGORIES-DASC ALPHA

1. Troops in Contact (TIC) A hostile target which is in proximity to and has actively engaged friendly forces, requiring detailed coordination of each air mission with the ground forces in regards to location, fire, and movement.
2. Confirmed Enemy Location (CEL) A hostile target in which the enemy's location is known, and his presence is being observed by air and ground observers.
3. Acquired Enemy Location (AEL) Enemy locations based on SLAR, Red Haze, ground surveillance radars, airborne personnel detectors and other detection devices or IR reports. Targets in this category must be based upon timely reaction and additionally must meet all of the following criteria: (1) Detection by one or more of the sensory devices listed or IR reports; (2) Validation by an evaluation of enemy patterns of movements and operations; (3) Terrain analysis by competent targeting agencies.
4. Suspected Enemy Locations (SEL) Hostile targets or locations that do not meet the criteria of "Acquired Enemy Location" or where circumstances have precluded the timely expenditure of ordnance, thereby allowing the target to deteriorate into this category. Included in this category: (1) Agent Reports; (2) PW Reports; (3) Enemy caught in a cordon operation where specific location as defined under "AEL" or "CEL" cannot be determined; (4) Nonvalidated source of enemy sniper or small-arms fire.
5. Fixed Target Destruction (FTD) Fixed installations of a nonperishable nature such as: (1) Bridges; (2) Bunkers, caves, and other fortifications; (3) Structures; (4) Weapons positions; (5) Road complexes.
6. Troop Assault Preparation (TAP) Targets on which ordnance is delivered, immediately prior to a troop assault to neutralize enemy forces, fortifications, prepositioned mines, booby traps, and other assault counter devices.

7. Landing Zone Clearing
(LZC)

Ordnance delivered to clear or partially clear terrain of man-made or natural obstacles to accommodate the landing of heliborne forces.

SOURCE: Tac Air Expenditure Analysis System, Hq, I FFV, 1 Jun-30 Jun 69 (C)

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APPENDIX II

RELATIVE STRENGTH, ALLIED AND ENEMY TROOPS IN 24th STZ *Sheet 5*

Estimated VC/NVA Strength:

NVA

Infantry	7	Battalions	
Reconnaissance	1	"	
Sapper	1	"	
Artillery	5	"	
Engineer	2	"	
	<u>16</u>	"	5,340 Personnel

VC

Local Force Battalion	180	
District Company	<u>120</u>	
	300	Personnel

Total - 5,640

Allied Strength:

ARVN	2,740	
CIDG	1,314	
RF/PF	1,105	
U.S.	<u>1,344</u>	
	6,503	Personnel

Ben Het

ARVN	511	
CIDG	440	
U.S. Artillery	207	
U.S. Advisers	<u>25</u>	
	1,183	Personnel

SOURCE: Briefing, Lt. Col. C. J. Cunningham, Chief, Intel Spt Div,
DCSI, Hq 7AF, undated.

APPENDIX III

TACTICAL AIR SUPPORT OF BEN HET/FAC VR SORTIES

<u>Date - 1969</u>	<u>Number of Sorties</u>
1-7 May	74
9-14 May	226
15-21 May	220
22-28 May	122
29-4 June	119
5-11 June	111
12-18 June	231
19-25 June	347
26-2 July	378
	<u>1,828</u>

Average Daily Sortie Rate--29.0
Total COMBAT SKYSPOT-----641

Tac Air BDA

Killed by Air	462 (Includes 297 credited jointly to Artillery and Tac Air)
Secondary Explosions	202
Secondary Fires	179

<u>Fighting Positions</u>	<u>Destroyed</u>	<u>Damaged</u>
Bunker-Structures	1,334	157
Weapons Positions	33	13
Bridges	2	1
Foxholes-Tunnels	120	13

FAC/VR Sorties

<u>May</u>	FAC	138
	VR	169
<u>June</u>	FAC	99
	VR	157
<u>July</u>	FAC	2
	VR	6
TOTAL		<u>571</u>

SOURCE: Briefing, Lt Col C. J. Cunningham, Chief, Intel Spt Div, DCSI, Hq 7AF, undated.

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APPENDIX IV

ARC LIGHT IN SUPPORT OF BEN HET

<u>Date - 1969</u>	<u>Number Target Boxes</u>	<u>Sorties</u>
7 May	2	12
8-14 May	12	72
15-21 May	18	108
22-28 May	11	58
29-4 June	25	144
5-11 June	17	89
12-18 June	10	56
19-25 June	17	102
26-2 July	<u>28</u>	<u>163</u>
	140	804

ARC LIGHT Sortie Rate 13.9

SPOOKY/SHADOW

<u>Sorties</u>	<u>Sortie Rate</u>
109	1.6

59,000 Rounds Expended

SOURCE: Briefing, Lt Col C. J. Cunningham, Chief, Intel Spt Div, DCSI,
Hq 7AF, undated.

GLOSSARY

ABF	Attack By Fire
AEL	Acquired Enemy Location
ALO	Air Liaison Officer
APC	Armored Personnel Carrier
AO	Area of Operation
ARVN	Army of Republic of Vietnam
BDA	Bomb Damage Assessment
CAP	Combat Air Patrol
CEL	Confirmed Enemy Location
CG	Commanding General
CIDG	Civilian Irregular Defense Group
CSS	COMBAT SKYSPOT
CTZ	Corps Tactical Zone
DASC	Direct Air Support Center
FAC	Forward Air Controller
FFV	Field Force Vietnam
FSB	Fire Support Base
FWMAF	Free World Military Assistance Forces
KBA	Killed by Air
KIA	Killed in Action
LOC	Line of Communication
LZC	Landing Zone Clearing
MACV	Military Assistance Command Vietnam
MSF	Mobile Strike Force
NVA	North Vietnamese Army
OPCON	Operational Control
PF	Popular Force
PW	Prisoner of War
RF	Regional Force
SASI	Seventh Air Force Special Interdiction Program
SEA	Southeast Asia
SEL	Suspected Enemy Location
SF	Special Forces
STZ	Special Tactical Zone

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TACC	Tactical Air Control Center
TACP	Tactical Air Control Party
TASE	Tactical Air Support Element
TIC	Troops in Contact
TOC	Tactical Operations Center
TOT	Time Over Target
VC	Viet Cong
VNAF	Vietnamese Air Force
VR	Visual Reconnaissance